No decision on extension of quota system: Anwar

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD, Dec 31: The government will soon be introducing a constitutional amendment bill to link the quota system in services with proposed special seats for women in the National Assembly.

"We are currently seeking the clearance of the prime minister for shortly moving a new constitutional amendment bill to continue the quota system for which we are linking it with women's seats in the lower house", said the Minister for Law and justice, Khalid Anwar.

He told *Dawn* here on Thursday that it was still to be decided whether the quota system in services should be extended for another 10 or 20 years. However, he did not elaborate as to why this was being linked with proposed special seats for women in the National Assembly.

Superior courts in the past had declared the quota system invalid and extended the last waiver in 1997 for appointments on quota basis.It has been challenged off and on since 1973 when constitutional provisions in this regard had lapsed.

KARACHI OPERATION: Responding to a question, the minister said it was not possible to determine how long the Karachi operation against terrorists and hardened criminals would continue.

He said he could say with authority that a good beginning had been made in Karachi to improve the law and order situation, specially after the setting up of military courts there.

Asked why the trial period had been extended from three days to eight days, the minister pointed out that it had been done at the request of military authorities who wanted more time to ensure justice with each case.

"The whole idea is to make it known that the military courts are quite impartial", he said.

Answering a question, Mr Anwar pointed out that the judge advocate general (JAG) branch of the army wanted to satisfy itself to the maximum extent before taking cases for the military courts.

To another question, he said some political and non-political elements were trying to destabilise Karachi situation, for which they would not be pardoned. He said time had come when the whole nation should condemn those who were out to disrupt peace in Karachi.